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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001410

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: ERDOGAN AND AK LOOKING GOOD IN SIIRT

(U) Classified by Acting Political Counselor Nicholas S.  
Kass. Reason: 1.5 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Contacts across the political spectrum indicate AK and its party leader Erdogan are poised to win the March 9 special election in Siirt province, paving the way Erdogan's entry into Parliament and eventual move to the Prime Ministry.

-- AK M. P. Egemen Bagis told us March 4 that 16 AK deputies now in Siirt are lobbying hard on Erdogan's behalf and are confident the party will sweep Siirt's three seats in the legislature. AK Vice Chairman Dengir Firat and M.P. Ihsan Arslan are among the high-profile figures representing Erdogan in Siirt.

-- Meanwhile, opposition CHP deputies Bulent Tanla and Emin Koc tell us that their party is resigned to the possibility of an AK sweep, but they hold out hope that they could capture one seat. CHP is maintaining its own 10-man team in the province, rotating fresh shifts on a daily basis.

12. (C) According to pro-Kurdish HADEP Chairman Ahmet Turan Demir, AK's overwhelming advantage in financial resources guarantees that AK will win at least one seat. Demir explained to us March 4 that during the run-up to the election, AK's campaign strategy has emphasized that: 1) electing the future P.M. is an honor; 2) the P.M. will bring tangible economic benefits to the province; and 3) Erdogan's wife is from Siirt.

13. (C) Both CHP and HADEP officials separately denied to us rumors that they are cooperating against AK in Siirt.

-- Our CHP contacts admit that they considered the idea briefly but abandoned it. They say they want Erdogan to become P.M., so that he can assume more responsibility for AK's policies.

-- Demir averred that HADEP voters are likely to stay home to protest what HADEP claims was AK's "illegal" petition to have the Nov. 3 election results in Siirt nullified, thereby setting up the March 9 denouement. He charged that CHP is "far worse than AK" because it supports Turkish military repression in predominantly Kurdish Southeastern Turkey.  
PEARSON